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SUBJECT: DJIBOUTI CABINET RESHUFFLE: EIGHT NEW FACES

REF: DJIBOUTI 145

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: In a shuffle widely anticipated since Djibouti's February 8 legislative elections (reftel), President Omar Ismail Guelleh named a new cabinet today. The announcement followed the pro forma resignation of Prime Minister Deleita Mohamed Deleita on March 25, and his reappointment barely twenty-four hours later on March 26. While the new cabinet includes eight new ministers (out of a total of twenty), many key posts--including Prime Minister, Foreign Affairs, Defense, Health, and Education--remain constant. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) Eight new ministers were announced on national state-run radio the afternoon of March 27. One position, the Secretary of State to the Prime Minister, in charge of

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National Solidarity, is a newly created post:

--Minister for the Promotion of Women: Nimo Boulhan Houssein  
--Minister of Islamic Affairs: Hamoud Abdi Sultan  
--Minister of Labor: Moussa Ahmed Hassan  
--Minister of Youth, Sport, Leisure, and Tourism: Hasna Barkat Daoud  
--Minister of Transport and Equipment: Ali Hassan Bahdon  
--Minister of Energy and Natural Resources: Moussa Bouh Odowa  
--Minister-Delegate to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in charge of International Cooperation: Ahmed Ali Silay  
--Secretary of State to the Prime Minister, in charge of National Solidarity: Mohamed Ahmed Awaleh

¶3. (SBU) Three replaced ministers were named to non-cabinet posts:

--Mogueh Dirir Samatar, former Minister of Islamic Affairs, was named Advisor to the President  
--Hawa Ahmed Youssouf, former Minister-Delegate to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in charge of International Cooperation, was named advisor to the Prime Minister (NOTE: Hawa Ahmed Youssouf was an unsuccessful candidate to replace Julia Dolly Joiner of Gambia as African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs in January 2008. END NOTE.)  
--Ismail Ibrahim Houmed, former Minister of Transport, was named Ambassador Plenipotentiary

¶4. (SBU) COMMENT: While the number of women in the cabinet remains constant at two, there are now two female ministers instead of one female minister and one female minister-delegate. While the reshuffle is not radical, the new appointees seem generally both younger and more technocratic than their predecessors. END COMMENT.

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